

Meetings of Public Bodies

CHAPTER 13D

OPEN MEETING LAW

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13D.01 MEETINGS MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC; EXCEPTIONS.

Subdivision 1. **In executive branch, local government.** All meetings, including executive sessions, must be open to the public

- (a) of a state
 - (1) agency,
 - (2) board,
 - (3) commission, or
 - (4) department,

when required or permitted by law to transact public business in a meeting;

- (b) of the governing body of a
 - (1) school district however organized,
 - (2) unorganized territory,
 - (3) county,
 - (4) statutory or home rule charter city,
 - (5) town, or
 - (6) other public body;
- (c) of any
 - (1) committee,
 - (2) subcommittee,
 - (3) board,
 - (4) department, or
 - (5) commission,

of a public body; and

- (d) of the governing body or a committee of:
 - (1) a statewide public pension plan defined in section 356A.01, subdivision 24; or
 - (2) a local public pension plan governed by section 69.77, sections 69.771 to 69.775, or chapter 354A, 422A, or 423B.

Subd. 2. **Exceptions.** This chapter does not apply

- (1) to meetings of the commissioner of corrections;
- (2) to a state agency, board, or commission when it is exercising quasi-judicial functions involving disciplinary proceedings; or
- (3) as otherwise expressly provided by statute.

Subd. 3. **Subject of and grounds for closed meeting.** Before closing a meeting, a public body shall state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed.

Subd. 4. **Votes to be kept in journal.** (a) The votes of the members of the state agency, board, commission, or department; or of the governing body, committee,

subcommittee, board, department, or commission on an action taken in a meeting required by this section to be open to the public must be recorded in a journal kept for that purpose.

(b) The vote of each member must be recorded on each appropriation of money, except for payments of judgments, claims, and amounts fixed by statute.

Subd. 5. **Public access to journal.** The journal must be open to the public during all normal business hours where records of the public body are kept.

Subd. 6. **Public copy of members' materials.** (a) In any meeting which under subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, and section 13D.02 must be open to the public, at least one copy of any printed materials relating to the agenda items of the meeting prepared or distributed by or at the direction of the governing body or its employees and:

- (1) distributed at the meeting to all members of the governing body;
- (2) distributed before the meeting to all members; or
- (3) available in the meeting room to all members;

shall be available in the meeting room for inspection by the public while the governing body considers their subject matter.

(b) This subdivision does not apply to materials classified by law as other than public as defined in chapter 13, or to materials relating to the agenda items of a closed meeting held in accordance with the procedures in section 13D.03 or other law permitting the closing of meetings.

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 4 s 1

13D.02 MEETINGS CONDUCTED BY INTERACTIVE TV; CONDITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Conditions.** A meeting governed by section 13D.01, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, and this section may be conducted by interactive television so long as:

- (1) all members of the body participating in the meeting, wherever their physical location, can hear and see one another and can hear and see all discussion and testimony presented at any location at which at least one member is present;
- (2) members of the public present at the regular meeting location of the body can hear and see all discussion and testimony and all votes of members of the body;
- (3) at least one member of the body is physically present at the regular meeting location; and
- (4) each location at which a member of the body is present is open and accessible to the public.

Subd. 2. **Members are present for quorum, participation.** Each member of a body participating in a meeting by electronic means is considered present at the meeting for purposes of determining a quorum and participating in all proceedings.

Subd. 3. **Monitoring from remote site; costs.** If interactive television is used to conduct a meeting, to the extent practical, a public body shall allow a person to monitor the meeting electronically from a remote location. The body may require the person making such a connection to pay for documented marginal costs that the public body incurs as a result of the additional connection.

Subd. 4. **Notice of regular and all member sites.** If interactive television is used to conduct a regular, special, or emergency meeting, the public body shall provide notice of the regular meeting location and notice of any site where a member of the public body will be participating in the meeting by interactive television. The timing and method of providing notice must be as described in section 13D.04.

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2

13D.03 CLOSED MEETINGS FOR LABOR NEGOTIATIONS STRATEGY.

Subdivision 1. **Procedure.** (a) Section 13D.01, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, 5, and section 13D.02 do not apply to a meeting held pursuant to the procedure in this section.

(b) The governing body of a public employer may by a majority vote in a public meeting decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals, conducted pursuant to sections 179A.01 to 179A.25.

(c) The time of commencement and place of the closed meeting shall be announced at the public meeting.

(d) A written roll of members and all other persons present at the closed meeting shall be made available to the public after the closed meeting.

Subd. 2. **Meeting must be recorded.** (a) The proceedings of a closed meeting to discuss negotiation strategies shall be tape-recorded at the expense of the governing body.

(b) The recording shall be preserved for two years after the contract is signed and shall be made available to the public after all labor contracts are signed by the governing body for the current budget period.

Subd. 3. **If violation claimed.** (a) If an action is brought claiming that public business other than discussions of labor negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals was transacted at a closed meeting held pursuant to this section during the time when the tape is not available to the public, the court shall review the recording of the meeting in camera.

(b) If the court finds that this section was not violated, the action shall be dismissed and the recording shall be sealed and preserved in the records of the court until otherwise made available to the public pursuant to this section.

(c) If the court finds that this section was violated, the recording may be introduced at trial in its entirety subject to any protective orders as requested by either party and deemed appropriate by the court.

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2

13D.04 NOTICE OF MEETINGS.

Subdivision 1. **Regular meetings.** A schedule of the regular meetings of a public body shall be kept on file at its primary offices. If a public body decides to hold a regular meeting at a time or place different from the time or place stated in its schedule of regular meetings, it shall give the same notice of the meeting that is provided in this section for a special meeting.

Subd. 2. **Special meetings.** (a) For a special meeting, except an emergency meeting or a special meeting for which a notice requirement is otherwise expressly established by statute, the public body shall post written notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting on the principal bulletin board of the public body, or if the public body has no principal bulletin board, on the door of its usual meeting room.

(b) The notice shall also be mailed or otherwise delivered to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings with the public body. This notice shall be posted and mailed or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting.

(c) As an alternative to mailing or otherwise delivering notice to persons who have filed a written request for notice of special meetings, the public body may publish the notice once, at least three days before the meeting, in the official newspaper of the public body or, if there is none, in a qualified newspaper of general circulation within the area of the public body's authority.

(d) A person filing a request for notice of special meetings may limit the request to notification of meetings concerning particular subjects, in which case the public body

is required to send notice to that person only concerning special meetings involving those subjects.

(e) A public body may establish an expiration date for requests for notices of special meetings pursuant to this subdivision and require refiling of the request once each year.

(f) Not more than 60 days before the expiration date of a request for notice, the public body shall send notice of the refiling requirement to each person who filed during the preceding year.

Subd. 3. Emergency meetings. (a) For an emergency meeting, the public body shall make good faith efforts to provide notice of the meeting to each news medium that has filed a written request for notice if the request includes the news medium's telephone number.

(b) Notice of the emergency meeting shall be given by telephone or by any other method used to notify the members of the public body.

(c) Notice shall be provided to each news medium which has filed a written request for notice as soon as reasonably practicable after notice has been given to the members.

(d) Notice shall include the subject of the meeting. Posted or published notice of an emergency meeting is not required.

(e) An "emergency" meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the public body, require immediate consideration by the public body.

(f) If matters not directly related to the emergency are discussed or acted upon at an emergency meeting, the minutes of the meeting shall include a specific description of the matters.

(g) The notice requirement of this subdivision supersedes any other statutory notice requirement for a special meeting that is an emergency meeting.

Subd. 4. Recessed or continued meetings. (a) If a meeting is a recessed or continued session of a previous meeting, and the time and place of the meeting was established during the previous meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting, then no further published or mailed notice is necessary.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, the term "meeting" includes a public hearing conducted pursuant to chapter 429 or any other law or charter provision requiring a public hearing by a public body.

Subd. 5. Closed meetings. The notice requirements of this section apply to closed meetings.

Subd. 6. State agencies. For a meeting of an agency, board, commission, or department of the state:

(1) the notice requirements of this section apply only if a statute governing meetings of the agency, board, or commission does not contain specific reference to the method of providing notice; and

(2) all provisions of this section relating to publication are satisfied by publication in the State Register.

Subd. 7. Actual notice. If a person receives actual notice of a meeting of a public body at least 24 hours before the meeting, all notice requirements of this section are satisfied with respect to that person, regardless of the method of receipt of notice.

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2

13D.05 MEETINGS HAVING DATA CLASSIFIED AS NOT PUBLIC.

Subdivision 1. General principles. (a) Except as provided in this chapter, meetings may not be closed to discuss data that are not public data.

(b) Data that are not public data may be discussed at a meeting subject to this chapter without liability or penalty, if the disclosure relates to a matter within the scope of the public body's authority and is reasonably necessary to conduct the business or agenda item before the public body.

(c) Data discussed at an open meeting retain the data's original classification; however, a record of the meeting, regardless of form, shall be public.

Subd. 2. When meeting must be closed. (a) Any portion of a meeting must be closed if expressly required by other law or if the following types of data are discussed:

(1) data that would identify alleged victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors or vulnerable adults;

(2) active investigative data as defined in section 13.82, subdivision 7, or internal affairs data relating to allegations of law enforcement personnel misconduct collected or created by a state agency, statewide system, or political subdivision; or

(3) educational data, health data, medical data, welfare data, or mental health data that are not public data under section 13.32, 13.3805, subdivision 1, 13.384, or 13.46, subdivision 2 or 7.

(b) A public body shall close one or more meetings for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority. If the members conclude that discipline of any nature may be warranted as a result of those specific charges or allegations, further meetings or hearings relating to those specific charges or allegations held after that conclusion is reached must be open. A meeting must also be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.

Subd. 3. What meetings may be closed. (a) A public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The public body shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the public body shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.

(b) Meetings may be closed if the closure is expressly authorized by statute or permitted by the attorney-client privilege.

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2; 1999 c 227 s 22; 2002 c 379 art 1 s 5

13D.06 CIVIL FINES; FORFEITURE OF OFFICE; OTHER REMEDIES.

Subdivision 1. Personal liability for \$300 fine. Any person who intentionally violates this chapter shall be subject to personal liability in the form of a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$300 for a single occurrence, which may not be paid by the public body.

Subd. 2. Who may bring action; where. An action to enforce the penalty in subdivision 1 may be brought by any person in any court of competent jurisdiction where the administrative office of the governing body is located.

Subd. 3. Forfeit office if three violations. (a) If a person has been found to have intentionally violated this chapter in three or more actions brought under this chapter involving the same governing body, such person shall forfeit any further right to serve on such governing body or in any other capacity with such public body for a period of time equal to the term of office such person was then serving.

(b) The court determining the merits of any action in connection with any alleged third violation shall receive competent, relevant evidence in connection therewith and, upon finding as to the occurrence of a separate third violation, unrelated to the previous violations, issue its order declaring the position vacant and notify the appointing authority or clerk of the governing body.

(c) As soon as practicable thereafter the appointing authority or the governing body shall fill the position as in the case of any other vacancy.

Subd. 4. **Other remedies; requirements; limits.** (a) In addition to other remedies, the court may award reasonable costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorney fees of up to \$13,000 to any party in an action under this chapter.

(b) The court may award costs and attorney fees to a defendant only if the court finds that the action under this chapter was frivolous and without merit.

(c) A public body may pay any costs, disbursements, or attorney fees incurred by or awarded against any of its members in an action under this chapter.

(d) No monetary penalties or attorney fees may be awarded against a member of a public body unless the court finds that there was a specific intent to violate this chapter.

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2

13D.07. CITATION.

This chapter may be cited as the "Minnesota Open Meeting Law."

History: 1957 c 773 s 1; 1967 c 462 s 1; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 654 s 15; 1973 c 680 s 1,3; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1981 c 174 s 1; 1983 c 137 s 1; 1983 c 274 s 18; 1984 c 462 s 27; 1987 c 313 s 1; 1990 c 550 s 2,3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 12; 1991 c 319 s 22; 1994 c 618 art 1 s 39; 1997 c 154 s 2